

# THE TESKA BEAT

News on the projects that make us tick.

Imagine it is early morning. Your first destination of the day: the Metra station. With a backpack filled with your work files and laptop, you hop on your bike and pedal towards the station along the bike trail. Looking to your left, you see a row of townhouses overlooking a wetland strewn with native prairie plantings. To your right is the community garden (mental note: check on tomatoes after work to see if they are ripe enough for picking). The Pace bus buzzes by. Up ahead you see a bridge crossing over a stream flowing with fresh rainwater from last night's storm. As the Metra station comes into view, you see a steady cascade of parents walking their children to the neighborhood elementary school. Almost there. You whiz by the bioswale you and your neighbors adopted to maintain. Arrival. You lock your bike on the rack with the other "bike-and-ride" commuters. Looking down the tracks, the train is approaching from the distance. "Just in time," you think, as you get out a book to read on the commute to work. Where are you? Possibly the Village of Prairie Grove.

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### A WHOLE NEW MEANING TO THE PHRASE, "HOUSE WINE"



- Chicago Tribune: "Lake Forest Winery Homes: Development would pair houses and wines | Builder envisions smaller, environmentally friendly housing that surrounds a vineyard." Read more on page 3

### NEW EVIDENCE SUGGESTS: DIETS NOT JUST FOR PEOPLE CHECK THE WIDTH OF YOUR ROADS.



- Teska advocates narrowing St. Charles Road in Villa Park to enhance pedestrian environment and retail shopping node. Read more on page 4.



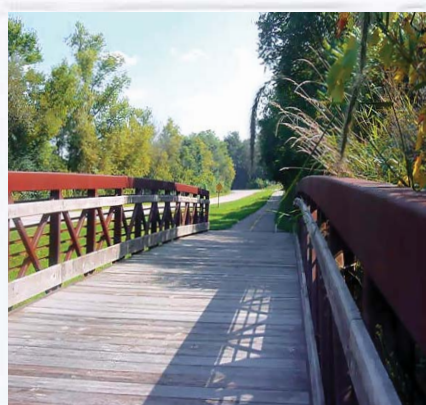
## A PRAIRIE GROVE TOWN CENTER & TOD PLAN

**LOCATION :: PRAIRIE GROVE, IL | ARTICLE BY :: TODD VANADILOK**  
 If the Village can maintain the momentum from the current planning efforts, this imaginative scene may play out in day-to-day life in Prairie Grove's proposed Town Center and Transit-Oriented Development. With funding and technical assistance from the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Community Planning Program, Teska Associates, Inc. has led a collaborative planning process with Village staff and a Steering Committee to plan and design a mixed-use Town Center and TOD around the future Metra station on the Village's far northwest side. Along with Metro Transportation Group and LandUse|USA, Teska has developed alternative framework plan concepts outlining the general land use, design, infrastructure, and transportation principles. These concepts are based on an existing conditions assessment, findings from an interactive public design charrette, and discussions with Village staff, Steering Committee, and transit agencies.

While the Metra station and mixed-use Town Center are the primary focus of this planning effort, the plan also places a strong emphasis on integrating sustainability principles into the project's ultimate design, including the potential to seek LEED-ND certification. While these principles will help promote environmental stewardship and produce a sustainable development, they will also help the Village of Prairie Grove build itself as a regional leader in sustainability within McHenry County.



3D SketchUp rendering of proposed townhomes



Prairie Grove Bikeway and Pedestrian Bridge

**B** **Montgomery TOD Plan & Park-and-Ride Location Study**

LOCATION :: MONTGOMERY, IL | ARTICLE BY :: TODDVANADILOK

In November 2008, the Village of Montgomery opened its new Village Hall in the heart of downtown. As the municipal building continues to acclimate to its new surroundings in Montgomery's historic core, it may not be long before some new kid developments sprout up on the block.

Building upon the Village's commitment to its downtown through the opening of new Village Hall, Teska Associates, Inc. led a community-based planning process in Montgomery to prepare a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Park-and-Ride Location Study. This Plan creates a long range vision centered around the potential to extend commuter rail service south from Aurora to Montgomery and Kendall County. With funding and technical assistance from the Regional Transportation Authority's (RTA) Community Planning Program, Teska designed the planning process to provide ample opportunities for community interaction and input, including the use of a three-dimensional mapping exercise using building blocks, character design examination using electronic voting key pads, public open houses, and an interactive project website.



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES | EXISTING CHARACTER EXAMPLES BY LAND USE

“Montgomery officials back downtown vision  
New plan recommends sites for  
Metra Park-n-Ride, commuter station”  
- Article in the Ledger Sentinal

The Plan promotes the development of Montgomery's traditional downtown as a vital mixed-use district with new commercial and higher density housing, which would help develop the critical mass to meet the ridership needs of a commuter station and sustainable downtown. The TOD would also help reinvigorate Downtown Montgomery, enlivening it with uses and amenities that would draw new residents and visitors to the Village's historic core and key riverfront location.

Extensive urban design and architectural guidelines provide the basis for the regulatory tools, such as form-based zoning approaches, that the Village has developed for its downtown.

Today, the new Village Hall shines as the latest addition to Downtown Montgomery's landscape. In the years to come, Village Hall will welcome new downtown additions to shine and enhance the landscape, providing expanded public transportation options, diverse housing choices, unique shopping and recreation opportunities to the residents and visitors of Montgomery.

**C** **Maple Avenue Streetscape and Church Street Plaza**

LOCATION :: EVANSTON, IL | ARTICLE BY :: JODI MARIANO

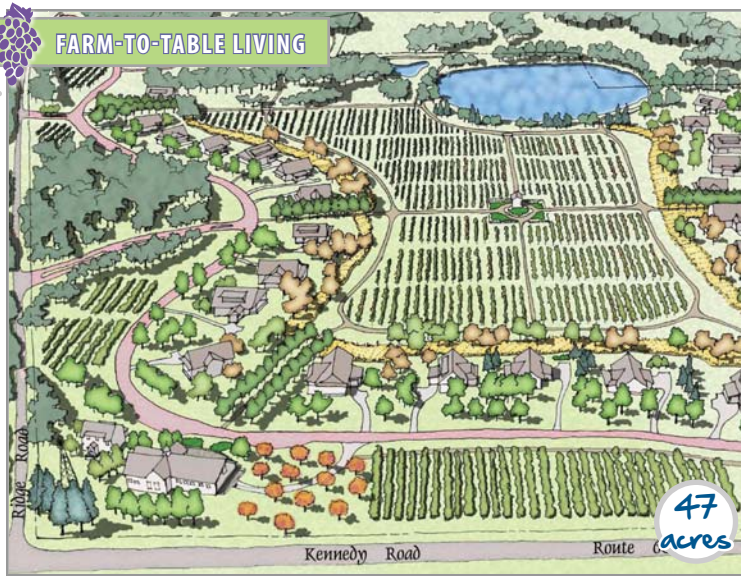
The purpose of the streetscape reconstruction was to narrow the roadway and widen the sidewalks to accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic associated with the movie theater, parking garage and nearby retail shops. In addition, the existing corner plaza at the southwest corner of Maple Ave and Davis Street was in need of reconfiguration to promote a welcoming outdoor people place to the theater district.

Teska and the City of Evanston reached out to the Maple Avenue merchants, property owners and Optima Views homeowners association to solicit input on the streetscape design and to coordinate construction activities with the upcoming holiday shopping season. During the construction, coordination of the sidewalk access to shops and management of vehicular traffic was a critical element to allow the retailers, the theatre and parking garage to all remain open for business. Communication with visitors, shopkeepers and property owners was maintained on a daily basis to help keep all operations running as smoothly as possible during the construction.



- Features of the streetscape include the following:
- Narrowed roadway travel lanes, replaced curb, gutter, and milled/resurfaced street
  - Relocated underground utilities, sewer and water, fire hydrants & street lighting
  - Reconfigured on-street parking/loading areas
  - Widened sidewalks
  - New mid-block pedestrian crossing & enlarged waiting areas

- New outdoor plaza amphitheatre seating, landscape & planters
- Decorative paving, Parkway plantings, Seasonal planters, Bike racks
- Reused existing precast paver bricks and iron tree grates.
- Provided innovative footings and sub-surface detailing to avoid disruption of major fiber optic communication trunk lines within the plaza area.
- Provided for ADA compliant slope grading



OVERALL SKETCH PLAN



WINERY AERIAL



STABLES

**D White Stable Vineyard: Development would Pair Houses with Wine**  
 LOCATION :: LAKE FOREST, IL | ARTICLE BY :: NICK PATERA

TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING. Teska received preliminary approval from the City of Lake Forest for a 47 acre property that is planned for 34 homes, a vineyard, winery, orchard and community gardens. As the last working farm in Lake Forest, it was important that we retain the agricultural heritage and combine it with a marketable neighborhood concept. Our Client Tom Swarthout of the Highview Group is planning to initiate this project and proceed with planting the vineyard and building the winery next spring along with a production fruit orchard.

“ Trying to get a new housing development off the ground right now seems like a long shot, but Swarthout thinks the homes will appeal to wine-loving people looking to downsize and simplify their lives. ”

- Article in the Chicago Tribune | January 15, 2010

The original 1905 estate home, polo pony stable and caretaker home that will be retained were the inspiration for F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and designed by highly regarded architect Howard Van Doren Shaw. The Polo stable and caretaker home will be relocated and adapted as the winery cellar and social clubhouse.

We have incorporated sustainable elements including storm water bioswales, geothermal heat/cooling and pervious reclaimed brick road into the plan as LEED neighborhood design elements. The plan builds on the unique character of the property and the Village of Lake Forest while incorporating the latest trends in sustainability and farm-to-table living. You may also visit [www.whitestablevineyard.com](http://www.whitestablevineyard.com) for their website presentation.

**E Restoration Hammond | Downtown Plan**

LOCATION :: HAMMOND, IN | ARTICLE BY :: SCOTT GOLDSTEIN

Downtown Hammond presents a unique, but golden opportunity. It was built for a much larger city in the heyday of walkable downtowns and cities that relied on teeming masses of nearby workers and homes to buy goods and services on a daily basis. Compared with many areas, downtown Hammond has a very strong central core with several key institutions that bring thousands of people downtown each day for health care, education, arts, offices, courts, and religion. Its strong employment base of 6,800 employees within ½ mile of the downtown and 32,000 across the City provides a day-time population to support a rebirth of restaurants, retail and business services.

The plan, facilitated by Teska and Business Districts, Inc. (BDI) identified practical recommendations that will be implemented by the City of Hammond and several civic organizations and downtown institutions including Hammond Redevelopment Commission, Hammond Development Corporation, Lakeshore Chamber, Downtown Hammond Council, St. Margaret Mercy Hospital and First Baptist Church. Key among the recommendations are reviving Hohman Avenue, the backbone of downtown, through enhanced streetscapes, additional on-street parking, and a new town square. The plan also identifies marketing strategies and development incentives that will be used to attract additional businesses to the downtown.



3D RENDERING OF BUILDING FORMS

ZOOM-IN OF DOWNTOWN PLAN RENDERING



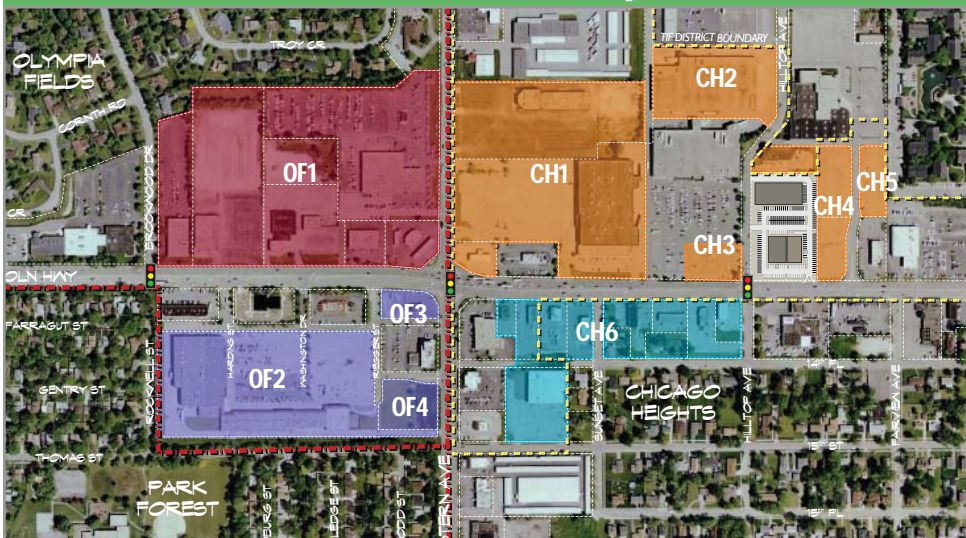
**F Western Avenue/Lincoln Highway Corridor Plan**

LOCATION :: OLYMPIA FIELDS & CHICAGO HEIGHTS, IL | ARTICLE BY :: MIKE HOFFMAN

Combine two diverse communities, engaged residents and property owners, and a skilled consulting team and what do you get? A Corridor Study that produces quick results. The Team of Teska Associates and Business Districts, Inc. were retained by the Village of Olympia Fields and the City of Chicago Heights to prepare a study of the Western Avenue/Lincoln Highway Corridor. The study featured a detailed market and physical analysis, evaluation of redevelopment opportunities, potential corridor enhancements, and a detailed implementation plan.

**SO WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS EFFORT?**

**OUTREACH PAY\$ OFF**



- **Innovative Study Financing.** The project was funded through an economic development grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and significant contributions by two private property owners. Municipal expense = \$0.
- **Active Participation.** Great dialog between residents and elected officials from both communities at an interactive public workshop that generated several good suggestions, fostered good communications between all parties, and built enthusiasm for plan implementation.
- **Deals are Getting Done.** Food 4 Less is planning to move into an existing center in Chicago Heights in late 2010, and Olympia Fields is actively working with property owners to attract a signature tenant to a vacant auto dealership property. The innovative planning process and active participation of property owners has already resulted in consolidation of parcels into a single ownership to help facilitate redevelopment. An existing used car dealer has moved to a new site within the study area that better meets their needs while opening up new possibilities on their former location.
- **Financing Incentives are in Place.** Since completion of the study, the Village of Olympia Fields has created a TIF to foster public/private cooperation and development financing in these tough economic times. The TIF plan was prepared by Teska.

**G A Community Involved | Villa Park Comprehensive Plan Adopted**

LOCATION :: VILLA PARK, IL | ARTICLE BY :: ERIN CIGLIANO

The Village of Villa Park is a community at the cusp of transition. While it has reached maturity as a suburban community - competitive development pressures, aging commercial corridors, lack of vacant land and a new commitment to sustainability suggest the future of Villa Park is dependant on a new vision that will transform single purpose commercial areas into higher density, mixed-use business districts and modern retail corridors.

Through a series of community workshops, online surveys and 3D building exercises involving residents, stakeholders and Village officials, priority areas were determined, goals were refined and a vision was established to guide future growth. Community Policies and Corridor Design Plans were developed to address the Village's three "priority areas"; North Avenue, St. Charles Road and Roosevelt Road. Site Plans, development strategies, and corridor design elements, including gateway signage, infill development scenarios and road "diets" were created to reduce the number of lanes on St. Charles Road, enhance sightlines, and foster pedestrian activity. The level of engagement experienced between residents, stakeholders, and Village officials throughout the planning process proved to be impressive and extremely beneficial. Everyone worked together towards a collective vision.

“ I have had the distinct pleasure of working on this Comprehensive Plan; I am not only a resident of the "Garden Village", but also have a business in town. Working with Teska & Associates and BDI, was a great experience. They have a real passion and genuine concern for what they do, and it shows!

- David Casey, Business Owner & Resident



RESIDENT ADDRESSES VILLAGE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT PUBLIC FORUM



ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND CONSULTANTS PARTICIPATE IN 3D BUILDING EXERCISE

PHOTOGRAPHS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS ACCOMPANY 3D BUILDING EXERCISE TO REINFORCE ISSUES AND INSPIRE DEVELOPMENT IDEAS.





**Teska assists City of Chicago and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) in securing a \$7 million sustainable broadband adoption grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce.**

LOCATION :: CHICAGO, IL | ARTICLE BY :: SCOTT GOLDSTEIN

Is technology a luxury or “must have” for communities seeking economic and community development? In 2009, the City of Chicago and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) asked Teska to facilitate “Smart Communities” neighborhood technology plans. The plans were based on the premise that technology means more than access to the Internet. Getting our communities connected means everything from adapting community outreach to take advantage of technology, to expanding access to training and education programs, to expand opportunities to employment and business creation.

The City of Chicago in partnership with LISC/Chicago has been awarded a two-year \$7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce in support of the Smart Communities Broadband Awareness Campaign. The grant will support a comprehensive campaign using the LISC New Communities Program platform through an integrated set of programs to encourage meaningful, sustainable use of broadband technology including the list of programs to the right.



**TESKA FACILITATES \$7 MILLION DOLLAR BROADBAND GRANT**



PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC YOUNG SMITH

The five Smart Communities are Humboldt Park, Pilsen, and the partnership of Englewood, Auburn Gresham and Chicago Lawn. **The grant was one of only 12 made in the nation, out of 340 applications**, and will be used to provide outreach, training, and education to five Chicago neighborhoods. Teska’s role was to facilitate and develop the local plans, write components of the application, and provide on-going technical assistance to LISC and the community partners. In addition to the federal grant, \$1.6 million in matching funds was pledged by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, LISC/Chicago, Chicago Community Trust and State of Illinois.

- **Enhanced Public Computing Access** – through the expansion of Center for Working Families computer resource rooms into FamilyNet Centers with increased hardware, software, accessible equipment, extended hours and family-focused trainings.
- **Training and Equipment Incentives** – through the development of new curriculum on basic and advanced uses of the internet for residents and small businesses. “Everyday Digital” workshops for residents to become educated consumers in a digital market place and to use the Internet for employment and educational purposes. For small businesses, Business Resource Centers will provide technology assessments, business plans and “webinars” to connect local businesses with new consumers and increase efficiency. Trainings will be tied to computer and hardware incentive programs.
- **Digital Youth Programs** - in partnership with the Digital Youth Network and Chicago Public Libraries – five public schools will have new after-school programs and three local libraries will receive new YouMedia ([www.youmediachicago.org](http://www.youmediachicago.org)) digital media labs to help mentor youth in digital media skills. Also a digital summer youth employment program will provide paid work opportunities in technology fields for community youth.
- **Outlets for Sharing and Using Content** – through the creation of Neighborhood News Portals (see [www.pilsenportal.org](http://www.pilsenportal.org)) residents, businesses and nonprofit organizations will create local content and connect people to local news, services and job opportunities.
- **Civic 2.0** – by combining the information and social capabilities of technology with relational organizing, new Tech Organizers will support the development of new leadership and digital literacy to build capacity and efficacy in each community.